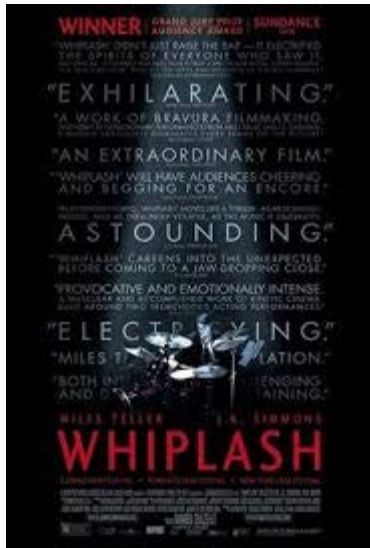




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## WHIPLASH



*Whiplash* was by far the most emotionally disruptive film nominated for this year's Oscars. It was also the best film that I saw. While there were many great films that moved me because of the stories and the enduring resilience of the characters, *Whiplash* gets my vote for the most intensely felt film of the year. For me, that made it the best picture.

The story is a blow-by-blow battle between master and student played out in compellingly forceful jazz notes and drum beats. Beats is the operative word here.

*Whiplash* is assaulting, brutal and often ugly as it shows us just what it sometimes takes to achieve greatness in the world. The violence is psychological as we feel every insult, every putdown delivered so venomously by the amazing J.K. Simmons, who deservedly won the Academy Award for

best supporting actor. He is phenomenal in the role of a perfectionist looking for someone to push into being great.

The methods to achieving excellence in jazz require hours of diligent practice, sacrifice and focus. For a musician to truly be the best in their field, it takes blood, sweat and tears. All of these and so much more are in *Whiplash*. From the first moment to the last, you are caught up in the action and the reaction to what is happening. You can feel the distress, determination and disappointment as though it were happening to you. It is rare when a film makes you forget where you are for two hours and leaves you spent and satisfied. Each note, each phrase carries so much weight. How hard will a person push to be the best? And, where would any of us be if we did not have people to push us past ourselves? We can only go so far on our own.

Teachers and mentors provide validation that we are capable of being who we were meant to be. Some encourage, some inspire, some motivate. Others beat it into us, so that we can learn to take the blows and get back up. Some of our hardest critics, greatest foes, and biggest enemies can be our greatest maestros. The key is to never give up playing. No matter what your instrument, if you have something great that you long to be, do your best. Anyone can do a good job. Being great at something takes persistence, determination, drive, ambition and the ability to stand up to your own fear, weakness, and limits; stare them all down and keep banging away because no one can stop you.

*Whiplash* is not an easy film to watch. But I guarantee you won't look away from it and you won't forget it. The soundtrack is haunting and frenetic. The acting is so precise, so deliberate that you cannot help but enjoy every moment no matter how painful. That is



what this great film does. It strips you down to the core of yourself, if that core of yourself is achievement. Go experience it, like the title says. Afterwards, you will feel

a little *Whiplash* of your own.

I give *Whiplash* five golden tickets.

